

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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The Body *vs* The Spirit

St. James says, "The body without the spirit is dead." This is one of the deep sayings of our holy scriptures and capable of many applications. The teachings of scripture concerning man is dichotomistic, that is that man is made up of body and spirit or soul. Self-consciousness teaches us that in us two great and diverse elements are united, a body, fearfully and wonderfully made and a spirit that is still more mysterious. The one is outward, visible, material and mortal. The other is inward, invisible, immaterial, and immortal. It is the spirit that gives form and life to the individual. Death is the departure of the spirit from the body and decay begins at once. Dead matter can never perform any of the functions of life. The body without the spirit is dead.

So far as we know everything is made up of body and soul except God. Every work and word of man has this double nature, and it is the union of these two natures that gives beauty and worth to them. Speech must be the body of which the thought and feeling is the spirit. Painting, sculpture, music, architecture must embody ideas and feelings or they become worthless. Materialism lays all emphasis upon the body; abstract idealism places all emphasis upon the idea or spirit. The whole intellectual history of the race centers about these two contentions. Our age has been called, and rightly, an age of Materialism, because materialistic standards have largely been in the ascendancy. As a necessary consequence we have the machine and the boss in politics, centralization of wealth in industry, a depraved realism and vulgarism in art, sensual indulgence and luxury in society, coldness and indifferentism in the church.

The tendency to lay stress upon the body to the exclusion of the spirit is especially manifest in the churches during the past decade. Doctrines and ordinances have again and again been raised to the dignity of an end. We would not in any way detract from the value of the ordinances to the individual and their absolute necessity in the present life. That which we contend for is, that everything in our relations to God must be pervaded by the spirit or it is worthless. When we entered the church we made a confession of faith in the scriptures. There must needs be an outward confession of faith, call it *creed* or whatever you may. But a confession of faith without the spirit of faith is dead orthodoxy. Demons believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Belief is a good, strong Anglo-Saxon word. It means that by which one lives. A saving faith has life and spirit in it. No belief in the mere facts of historical Christianity will save any one.

Our worship too has an outward form. But without the spirit of worship our forms become lifeless and useless. Forms of worship need not necessarily degenerate into mere formalism, neither is formalism in the church a sufficient apology for a non-observance of the forms of worship. Not fewer forms but more life in our forms of worship is the crying need of the church today. No amount of decoration and embellishment of the service will compensate for the absence of holy incense and offerings. This is also true of

our services in the church. Against such St. Paul warns us in I Cor. 13. Self-denials without love are like the empty sounds of a cymbal. The scriptures call such "dead works," or "wild fruit," both meaning the same thing. We are nothing and profit nothing. It is not our gift that God cares for, but how much real love and sacrifice we breathe into our gift. How necessary then that we be filled with the Holy Spirit. Only then can we render God and the world an effectual service. He is the secret of Life, Love and Power. Our confession of faith is made alive by a *trusting faith*. Our worship and service in the spirit will have not only the form but what is greater, the savor and flavor and power of true godliness.

Preaching the Gospel

The Christian world is appreciating today as it never has before, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is neither remote nor removed from human conditions. It is seen to touch life at innumerable and unexpected points. The Christianity of Jesus Christ is distinctly a social movement. Man is not capable of isolation. *Unus homo, nullus homo*. Man is what he is by virtue of his relations to what he is not. The great problem of our day is to put the individual into right relations with the forces and persons about him. From the days of Plato and the "Republic" until Edward Bellamy and "The looking backward" schemes of social and political reform have not been wanting. But all these have failed to gain and hold the world's confidence. Today we appreciate that Christ came into the world to set the individual in right relations with God, with nature and with his fellow-men. Christianity is set for the preservation and the enrichment of life, not the mere insuring and saving the soul. Jesus says, "I came to give the world life," and "My word is life." He says to you brother minister, in an especial way, that as he was sent into the world so you are sent into the world. Here then is your function. By this alone your ministry is to be judged. You are to give your people that which the human heart is ever hungering for and which the maternal things of earth cannot give. The service that does not enrich and broaden the real life of your people is a failure. But my brother you can not give what you do not have. The stream can rise no higher than its source. Your face must shine with the glory of the mountain of vision. From your life must go out influences that shall permanently influence for good those that come in contact with you.

And then you must preach the gospel. Nothing else will suffice. The world is tired of human substitutes. The world today is in travail for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The ministry today is too much inclined to seek subjects that will catch and tickle the public ear. There is altogether too much advertising of the pulpit and too worldly methods adopted to gain the reputation of being a popular preacher. The ministry of today needs to change its tactics and return to apostolic preaching. May there not be a revival of apostolic preaching among us; then shall we have multitudes added to the church and the kingdom of God hastened in its coming.